

Method and Apparatus to Reduce Arbitrated-Loop Overhead**Abstract of the Disclosure**

Control of a loop of a fibre-channel arbitrated-loop serial communications
5 channel is maintained (i.e., the loop connection is held open) as long as a minimum
amount of data, which optionally is determined by programming (called a
"programmable amount of data"), is available for transmission, in order to reduce the
overall amount of time spent arbitrating for control of the loop. The improved
communications channel system includes a channel node having one or more ports,
10 each port supporting a fibre-channel arbitrated-loop serial communications channel
loop, wherein each port arbitrates for control of that port's attached channel loop.
The system also includes an arbitration-and-control apparatus to reduce arbitrated-
loop overhead, wherein control of the channel loop, once control is achieved by
arbitration, is maintained by the arbitration-and-control apparatus as long as a
15 predetermined amount of data is available within control of the node. In addition, a
method to reduce arbitrated-loop overhead is described.

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